

Eight USS Missouri Sailors provide disaster assistance in Joplin Tornado response!

The eight USS Missouri (SSN 780) Sailors took voluntary leave to assist their namesake state returned to Groton June 8, 2011.

To officially thank them for their service, Kansas City Mayor Sly James and several city council members met the Sailors at the Kansas City International Airport to thank them for their efforts to assist the residents of Joplin.

“I was honored that USS Missouri Sailors participated in clean-up efforts in Joplin to help out our namesake state,” said Chief Yeoman (SS) Mike Shea, who led the group of eight. “Each Sailor elected to take voluntary leave for one week to offer assistance where needed in Joplin.”

The eight sailors arrived in Joplin on June 1 and assisted AmeriCorps, the American Red Cross, and the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency, by organizing volunteer efforts related to removing debris and assisting homeowners gather their belongings.

During their one-week volunteer effort, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon met with the Sailors earlier this week.



Governor Jeremiah "Jay" Nixon with the volunteer group from the U.S.S. Missouri in Joplin, June 2011. Photo courtesy of Mike Shea

“I’m very proud of our Sailors’ volunteer efforts to help the state of Missouri. These efforts demonstrate the strong relationship between our crew and the state and we were honored to have been able to contribute to the state’s recovery efforts,” said Cmdr. Timothy Rexrode, USS Missouri commanding officer.

Sailors participating in this relief effort include Lt. j.g. Joe Innerst; Lt. j.g. Ryan Sullivan; Chief Yeoman (SS) Mike Shea; Chief Machinist's Mate (SS) C.J. Kohlhofer; Chief Culinary Specialist (SS) Andy Scott; Electronics Technician 1st Class (SS) Jason Fenley; Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (SS/DV) Travis Fitzgerald, and Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (SS) Pat Patterson.

The Sailors collectively amassed 504 hours of volunteer service by clearing several acres of trees, cars and other debris, as well as organizing the volunteer efforts of more than 200 on a daily basis.

The USS Missouri Commissioning Committee assisted with the logistics for this effort and hosted a going home luncheon at the Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbeque in Kansas City, prior to their departure to Groton. Rear Admiral J. Stanton Thompson thanked the crew for their support of the state of Missouri and wanted the crewmembers to know that the support of the Commissioning Committee is an on-going effort. The Commission made sure that the attending crew members received a "Mizzou One" shirt for their efforts.

Editor's Note: We received notice that Chief Yeoman (SS) Mike Shea, has departed the ship and is now on the Admiral's staff, somewhere in Groton. We would like to wish him fair winds and following seas in his career....he is a first-rate gentlemen and a fine example of what our Navy should strive to be!